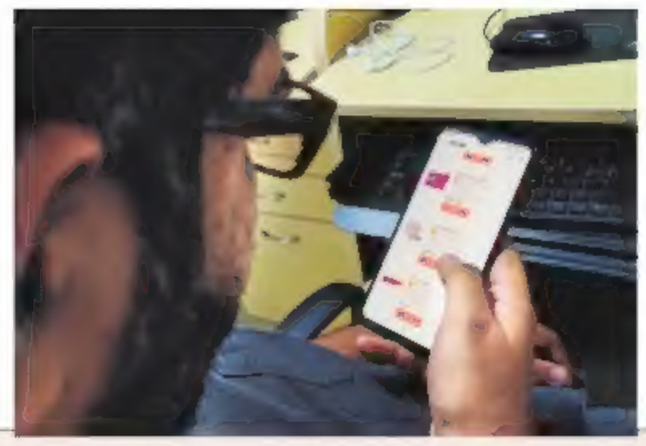
THE NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS
BENGALURU • TUESDAY • MAY 24, 2022 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 22 • LATE CITY EDITION



READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

CAIT NOW TRAINS ITS GUNS ON ONLINE PHARMACIES

The retailers' body has alleged that e-pharmacies are resorting to deep discounting and violating the Drugs & Cosmetics Act

DEEP DISCOUNTING AFFECT RETAIL CHEMISTS

According to the Confederation of All India Traders, e-pharma firms such as Pharmeasy, Medlife, 1Mg, Netmeds and e-commerce giants such as Amazon and Ripkart are offering medicines at 30-40% discount plus free shipping. CAIT says predatory pricing and unfair business practices will impact the livelihood of lakhs of small chemists across the country

'CAN'T SELL PRESCRIPTION DRUGS ONLINE'

- Predatory pricing is done with the sole intention of eliminating market competition, CAIT said. It also noted that sale of prescription drugs and medicines through online medium is illegal. The Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940, does not permit home delivery as prescription "in original" is required, it added

75%

DISCOUNT IS OFFERED BY E-PHARMACIES FOR WELLNESS PRODUCTS, CAIT ALLEGES

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

(From R) Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the IPEF's launch event in Tokyo on Monday | AP

India joins pact for Indo-Pacific synergy, growth

It covers half the population of the world and more than 60% of the global GDP

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

INDIA joined the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) that was conceived by US President Joseph R Biden and launched in Tokyo on Monday, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying he expects it to become the engine of global economic growth.

The IPEF covers half the population of the world and more than 60% of the global GDP. "India has historically been at the centre of trade flows in the Indo-Pacific region, having the world's oldest commercial port in Lohtal, Gujarat. India is committed towards working with all Indo-Pacific countries for an IPEF which is both inclusive and flexible. The foundation of resilient supply chains must be 3T's — Trust, Transparency and Timeliness," Modi said.

India is looking forward to collaborating with partner countries under the IPEF framework and work towards advancing regional economic connectivity, integration and boosting trade and investment within the region.

"The nations represented here today and those who will join this framework in future are signing up to work towards an economic vision that will deliver for all peoples. The vision for Indo-Pacific is free and open," said Biden.

The IPEF seeks to strengthen economic partnership amongst participating countries with the objective of enhancing resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness in the Indo-Pacific region, according to a joint statement issued on IPEF.

Amongst those who attended the event virtually were leaders from Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. The IPEF will initiate discussions on trade, supply chains, clean energy, decarbonisation, and Infrastructure and Tax and Anti-Corruption among member nations.

It isn't a traditional free-trade pact: US

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said the IPEF is not a traditional free trade agreement, adding new challenges need new approaches. The IPEF is part of US efforts to counter China's aggression on trade in the region

Meanwhile, India and the US signed an Investment Incentive Agreement (IIA) that superseded a similar pact in 1997. The IIA was signed by Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra and US CEO of International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) Scott Nathan. The IIA is a legal requirement for DFC, which covers various programmes, including debt, investment guarantee, investment insurance or reinsurance, and feasibility studies for potential projects and grants.

Petrol tax slashed, but you aren't getting full relief

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

CONSUMERS were in for a shock on Sunday as the reduction in petrol prices thanks to the excise duty cut was lower than they had thought. Vehicle users in Delhi were expecting ₹9.50 cut in petrol prices but the reduction was only ₹8.69. Consumers in other cities also had to shell out more than expected. Reason: the state-owned oil marketing companies (OMCs) raised the base price of petrol overnight, which jacked up the net retail price.

OMCs update the base price as and when backend crude and refining prices change. According to the price notification of OMCs, the oil companies increased the base price on petrol by 58 paise, making petrol almost ₹1 dearer. Following the hike in base price, the petrol costs ₹96.72 per litre in Delhi, instead of ₹95.91 per litre. It means people in Delhi were paying 81 paise per litre more at petrol pumps.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had on Saturday announced slashing the Central excise duty on petrol by ₹8 per litre and ₹6 per litre on diesel. She claimed it would reduce the price of petrol by ₹9.5 per litre and of diesel by ₹7 per litre in Delhi.

'Price benefits could be wiped out in a month'

The benefits of the excise duty cut would be lost in a month if the Centre allows fuel prices to be hiked like this, warned Kerala finance minister K N Balagopal

After confusion prevailed among consumers in Kerala on the real impact of the excise duty cut on fuel prices, the state's finance minister K N Balagopal clarified that consumers in the state should have got a price reduction of ₹10.41 following the 8 cut in excise duty and the ₹2.41 reduction in state tax but the unexpected base price shrank the benefit to ₹9.40.

Base price may be changed on a daily basis or less frequently as the OMCs prefer, said Gaurav Moda, India Energy Leader, EY. The final price comprises base price, central excise, dealers' commission and state VAT. Some taxes are absolute (like Central excise), some are levied as a percentage of the base price. So, the exact price reduction may vary from state to state.

There is no such issue in the case of diesel.

'INSPIRING KIDS, NOT RELIGION, BEHIND TEXTBOOK REVISION'

DONNA EVA & SHILPA P @ Bengaluru

Minister for Primary and Secondary Education BC Nagesh on Monday officially released the newly revised social science textbook for Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC), while saying the focus of the revision was only on inspiring the students, and not on the religions of the writers.

The just released textbook — 78 percent of the revised textbooks are already printed — includes a biographical chapter on Bhagat Singh written by author Dr G Ramakrishna, as well as a chapter on role models, 'Nijavanda Aadarsha Purusha Yaaraagabeku?', written by RSS founder KB Hedgewar. New chapters also included 'Shreshta Bharatiya Chinthanegalu' by Shatavadhani Ganesh, author in Sanskrit and Kannada and an extempore poet in multiple languages; and 'Thaayi Bharathiya Amaraputhraru' by Chakravarty Sulibele, a writer who predominantly writes in Kannada and Hindi and who is the founder of Yuva Brigade (an organisation formed by likeminded individuals who intend to do something good for the country with the teachings of Swami Vivekananda as the guiding principles) and Sodari Nivedita (a women's organisation started in September 2014 with a vision to spread the ideals of Swami Vivekananda). The revised textbook also includes passages on Sukdev, Shivarama Hari Rajguru, Narayanguru and Periyaar.

Incidentally, the textbook had been revised twice.

Previously, the textbook had four other chapters, including an essay on war by Kannada author Sara Abubaker, 'Vyagragita' by AN Murthy Rao (the first director of Kannada & Culture Department and who was known for his atheistic thoughts and writings).

CONTINUED ON: P4

Edu-linked rows disturbing: Irish ambassador

Irish Ambassador to India Brendan Ward said: "Multiple controversies do nothing positive for Karnataka's international image. This is one of the most developed states in India. It is one of the richest and has traditionally had very high education standards. Some of the scenes we have seen over the last few months have been quite disturbing."

All-party meet on Bihar caste census on Friday

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

IN a move that will force the BJP to take a clear stand on the sensitive issue of caste census, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has called an all-party meeting possibly on May 27. Announcing the decision on Monday, Nitish said there is near-consensus on the date of the meeting though some parties are yet to confirm.

Nitish Kumar

The announcement comes two weeks after he had a one-on-one meeting with RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on the issue.

In Bihar, caste remains the main factor for political groups to garner support of people in electoral politics but the BJP has adopted an ambivalent approach towards the proposed exercise. While the BJP has made massive inroads into the OBC support base in Bihar, its strong support base has been the upper castes. A caste census could show a greater number of OBCs and a reduced population of upper castes, which strengthen the demand that the 50% reservation cap be lifted. "It is all about OBCs, who have a sizable population in Bihar," said a political analyst.

BJP's dilemma on the issue was clearly visible when senior party leader and deputy CM Tarkishore Prasad was evasive in his recently media interaction. He said the party was deliberating the subject and once a decision was taken, it would be conveyed to reporters.

The Bihar Assembly had on February 27, 2020 passed a resolution requesting the Centre to hold caste census. It had passed a similar resolution on February 18, 2019.

CM meets industry leaders, Lulu to invest ₹2K cr

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who is in Davos to attend the World Economic Forum (WEF), held a series of meetings with major industry leaders. While a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with Lulu International Group for an investment of ₹2,000 crore in the state, many firms, including Dassault Systems, evinced interest to invest in Karnataka.

The Lulu Group plans to open four shopping malls, a hypermarket and an export-oriented agri-processing unit in the state. The projects are expected to create employment opportunities for 10,000 people. Director of Lulu International Group AV Anantharaman, who met the CM in Davos, signed the MoU with state government officials.

Bommai also held talks with heads of Jubilant Group, Hitachi, Siemens, Hero Motocorp, Dassault Systems and Nestle and showcased Karnataka as an ideal investment destination.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai holds talks with Lakshmi M Mittal, Executive Chairman of ArcelorMittal, at the World Economic Forum Meet in Davos, Switzerland

The CM invited Jubilant Group to explore investment opportunities in pharma and FMCG sectors and made a pitch for the FMCG Park being set up in Dharwad. He explained the incentive package being offered by the state government to draw investors to set up their units in the state.

The group is keen to establish its R&D unit on a 10-acre plot at Devanahalli. Presently, about 9,000 people are working with Jubilant Group in the state, according to a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO).

During talks with the CM, Hitachi representatives expressed their interest to set up an EV charging infrastructure unit in the state. The company has showed interest in exploring opportunities in energy and digitalisation sectors considering the immense talent pool available in Bengaluru. Hitachi Energy has its head office in Bengaluru and is building an engineering centre which will engage about 2,000 engineers, the statement said.

TALKS HELD WITH DASSAULT, NESTLE

CMO said Dassault evinced interest to invest in EV, modern production systems, industrial training for students in Digital 4.0 technology and Smart City project. Nestle showed interest in expanding the Nestle Instant Coffee unit in Nanjangud. The 'Beyond Bengaluru' project was discussed with Siemens to draw investments to Tumakuru, Hubballi-Dharwad and Mysuru.

LICENSED WEAPONS

Keep peace, not arms: Mann to Takht

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

AKAL Takht Jathedar Giani Harpreet Singh on Monday stirred the pot by urging all Sikhs to have licensed modern weapons, given the uncertain times they are living in. Hours later, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Punjab BJP president Ashwani Sharma took strong exception to the call, but Shiromani Akali Dal leaders supported it.

Significantly, people in Punjab already have more than 3.50 lakh licensed weapons.

The jathedar, in his address to mark the anniversary of the sixth Sikh guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib, urged Sikh boys and girls to keep traditional material arts like *gatka* alive. "Sikhs should also be armed with licenced modern weapons in today's age," he said while urging people to shun drugs.

Akal Takht is the highest temporal seat of Sikhs. The jathedar is its high priest.

Appalled by the statement, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann urged the jathedar to spread the message of peace, harmony and brotherhood, adding weapons don't have any place in a rules-based civilised society. Punjab BJP president Ashwani Sharma said that jathedar should talk about communal harmony and peace rather than weapons, adding his statement gave a wrong message to the masses.

For their part, Shiromani Akali Dal leaders justified the jathedar's message, saying weapons are integral to Sikhism. They said the call was in the context of the poor law and order situation in Punjab.

Priyanka to campaign for 2023 polls: DKS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

KPCC president DK Shivakumar said on Monday that Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will campaign for the party during the 2023 assembly polls in Karnataka.

"She has agreed to spend time in the state and will campaign during the assembly elections", he told reporters in New Delhi.

Shivakumar was in the national capital to finalise the party's candidates for two MLC seats, from the assembly, election to which will be held on June 3, amid speculation of a rift between him and Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah.

On reports of Priyanka contesting the June 10 Rajya Sabha polls from Karnataka, Shivakumar said the matter did not come up for discussion. P4

NATION WIDE	MAY 22	MAY 23
Fresh cases	2,226	2,022
Recoveries	2,202	2,099
Deaths	65	46
KARNATAKA	MAY 22	MAY 23
Fresh cases	167	107
Recoveries	101	110
Deaths	0	0

JAB-O-METER: TAKE YOUR SHOT
May 22: 8,81,668 doses
May 23: 11,91,382 doses
TOTAL DOSES: 1,92,30,82,800

JUST HANGING

At ₹19 crore, a bridge to nowhere in Kumta

SUBHASH CHANDRA MS @ Karwar

THIS is a bridge to nowhere. Constructed at a cost of ₹19.18 crore to provide connectivity to the residents of remote Bogribail village, this mega-project was to span the Aghanashini river. But though the bridge is complete, it appears that the authorities forgot to build connecting ramps and roads leading to it. Resourceful villagers have now built a temporary ramp with arecanut tree stumps to use it to walk across.

The bridge across Aghanashini river where villagers of Bogribail in Kumta taluk of Uttara Kannada district have constructed a makeshift ramp to cross on foot

For Jayanth Naik, a villager from Bogribail, life has been nothing but jugglery for the last three years. He goes till the bridge on his bike and parks it under a big tree next to the river. He then climbs the shaky ladder to the 30-foot-tall bridge and walks across to the other side to reach his destination. "This is like a house without a terrace. This bridge is almost of no use as no vehicle can go over it," he said.

The project was started five years ago to provide connectivity to Bogribail, Uppinnakatte and Aigle Kurve villages across the river by building the bridge and a road. The work was entrusted to the Karnataka Road Development Corporation. "We were taking a roundabout route to reach Honnavar or Kumta, which is 25 km long. This bridge can reduce our travel time, but it will happen only if the road is constructed," said another resident Praveen Naik.

CONTINUED ON: P5

EXPRESS READ

Gyanvapi row: Court to decide on pleas today

Lucknow: A local court in Varanasi on Tuesday will decide which petition is to be heard first in the Gyanvapi mosque case transferred to it by the apex court. District Judge A K Vishvesh on Monday heard arguments from both the Hindu and Muslim sides. P10

Vinai Kumar Saxena is new Lt Governor of Delhi

New Delhi: Vinai Kumar Saxena, the chairperson of Khadi and Village Industries Commission, was on Monday appointed the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. Saxena, 64, will succeed Anil Baijal who resigned last week citing "personal reasons"